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February 21, 1962

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MEMORANDUM

From: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Summary of Conversations in Germany about Negotiations

The following represents a summary of my conversations on the subject of negotiations with various German officials and political leaders. I am presenting it chronologically.

On Thursday morning, February 15th, I saw .....  
At the end of our conversation, he said he was now very reassured about the problem of military integration. He was, however, very worried about political unity. In particular, he was concerned about the procedure which had been adopted with respect to negotiations with the Soviet Union.

While he could understand our desire to negotiate, the process of bilateral negotiations was very dangerous. He was very concerned that the Soviet Union would now encourage Great Britain to make a try, and afterwards demand that the Federal Republic negotiate bilaterally. In this manner, the Soviet Union could achieve the objective outlined in their note of December 27th, and force the Federal Republic into bilateral negotiations. They could then make proposals which could only deeply embarrass the Federal Republic or else make it appear the villain if the negotiations broke down. We should keep in mind these observations for the future.

There was no time for me to explore this subject further.

On Thursday evening, February 15th, I met at dinner

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On Friday, February 16th, I had lunch with the

made the following points: It was essential for the Federal Republic to negotiate directly with the Soviet Union. The goal of these negotiations should be to obtain an amelioration of the Ulbrich regime. Of course, the Federal Republic was an ally of the United States and would undertake no actions which we opposed. However, it should be

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able to have a certain freedom of action vis-a-vis the Soviet Union.

I asked him what concessions they were willing to offer in return for an amelioration of the Ulbricht regime. .... replied vaguely and ..... [suggested that no outsider really had the right to ask such a question. I persisted and asked whether they might recommend the recognition of the Oder-Neisse line. This, they maintained, was absolutely unacceptable. It was a concession totally out of proportion to a Berlin settlement, not even acceptable in return for the amelioration of the East German regime. They replied in either a confused or deliberately ambiguous way that the concessions should be sought in Germany's military status.

In the afternoon of the 16th, I met with .....  
I have reported part of this conversation elsewhere. I asked him how he envisaged the future negotiations if there were an impasse in the Gromyko-Thompson talks. He replied that a German memorandum was going to the Soviet Union in reply to their note of December 27th, and that the FDP had approved it.

I asked him what he thought of the question of federal offices in Berlin. He replied that he was personally opposed to removing any, but that in any case, this was an unimportant nuance compared with the issues still dividing the negotiators.

He then said that very often the Germans were being asked to assume responsibility for negotiations and to demonstrate greater initiative. He said, "Let us be frank. Whenever we are asked to show greater initiative, what you really mean is that we should make concessions. You don't want us to show initiative on the issue of German unification. You want us to show it on the issue of rights to concede to the Soviets. I always tell

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my British friends who say the same thing to me that ..... am a very stupid person, but you British are very clever. Why don't you give me a small hint as to the direction in which my thinking ought to go, and perhaps I will then be able to show a little more initiative."

He then launched into a discussion of DeGaulle's views on negotiations, which I have reported separately.

In the evening of February 16th, I met for dinner with a group of German industrialists, roughly the constituency of the right wing of the CDU and the FDP. Most of the conversation concerned strategic matters.

I asked whether the Oder-Neisse line could be recognized in return for improving the status of Berlin. The unanimous opinion, which was quite violently expressed, was that this could not be done. Some of those present suggested that the United States was pressing for a conventional build-up so that it could accept a conventional defeat as a means of getting out of Berlin gracefully.

They also stressed that no reduction of the political ties between Berlin and the Federal Republic was acceptable to them.

On Saturday, February 17th, I had lunch with .....  
..... stressed that any negotiation had to retain a demand for German unification. He said that the younger generation in Germany would not accept indefinitely the argument that they had to pay for the crimes committed by their fathers. He also vehemently rejected my suggestion that the Oder-Neisse line be accepted in return for access guarantees. He said that this was paying rent for Berlin and would merely lead to new demands. Finally, he opposed any effort to increase the status of the East German regime.

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The afternoon of the 17th, I flew to Paris. One of the passengers on the plane was .....

Comment: These conversations suggest the following dilemma: The parties in Germany who are essentially pro-Western alliance are opposed to negotiations, while those who favor negotiations are essentially nationalist. As long as this attitude persists, the French have a certain leverage.

Progress in our NATO planning depends also to a considerable extent on the ability to keep the present psychological state in Germany. Any deterioration in this respect might induce the Germans to pick up their French option. And such a deterioration could occur if we do not make sure to bring the Germans along and make them assume responsibility in the negotiations over Berlin.

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